

REMARKS

In the Second Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-12 under 35 USC §112(2) as being indefinite. The Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 8-9, 12, 14, 15, 17-18 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mazda (JP 2003-237477) in view of Benkema et al. The Examiner rejected claims 13 and 16 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mazda in view of Benkema et al. and further in view of Tiesler et al. '528. The Examiner indicated claims 7 and 19 would be allowable if appropriately rewritten in independent form.

Applicants have amended Claims 1, 5, 6, 8, and 15 as indicated in the Claim Listing.

Reconsideration and re-examination of the application as amended considering the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Telephone Interview

The Examiner's explanation of the rejections and suggestions for claim language that would overcome them during the telephone interview are greatly appreciated. Applicants have amended various claims based on the Examiner's suggestions to more particularly point out the invention as described in greater detail below.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 112(2)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-7 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. Applicants respectfully disagree and traverse the Examiner's rejection. However, as described in greater detail below, Applicants have amended the claims to more particularly point out the invention and obviate the rejection.

With respect to claim 1, the Examiner stated in the Office Action that the apertures do not extend through the central channel, but rather are aligned with the central channel. As discussed with the Examiner, the apertures are aligned as the Examiner indicated, but also go through the headliner and support structure as illustrated and described with respect to Fig. 4.

While Applicants believe Claim 1 satisfied the requirements of 35 USC §112(2), Applicants have amended the claim consistent with the Examiner's remarks to more particularly point out the invention and advance prosecution. Claims 2-7 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1 so that the rejection of these claims is believed to be obviated.

Rejections Under 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 1-6, 8-9, 12, 14, 15, 17-18 were rejected as being unpatentable over Mazda in view of Benkema et al. Applicants respectfully disagree and traverse the Examiner's rejection.

As discussed with the Examiner, Applicants' claimed invention is directed to a configurable overhead console that includes a support structure extending longitudinally above the headliner that supports the headliner and attached modules and is substantially concealed or hidden from a vehicle occupant. The modules are attached to the support structure through the headliner using a fastener or latching device.

In contrast, the primary reference (Mazda) relied upon by the Examiner in rejecting Applicants' claims includes a module support structure 6 that is positioned below the headliner and is clearly visible to vehicle occupants along a substantial portion of its length as shown in Figures 1, 2, and 5 of Mazda. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 6 of Mazda, the module is secured with a fastener or latching device 7b that does not extend through the headliner. These features are also neither disclosed nor suggested by the secondary references relied upon by the Examiner. As such, none of the references relied upon by the Examiner taken alone or in any permissible combination teach or suggest a configurable overhead module as disclosed and claimed by Applicants.

For the reasons above, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejections under 35 USC §103(a).

Summary

Applicants have made a genuine effort to respond to the Examiner's rejections to advance prosecution of this application. Applicants respectfully submit that all formal and substantive requirements for patentability have been met and that this case is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

No additional fee is believed to be due as a result of filing this Amendment. However, please charge any fees to Deposit Account 50-2438 (Lear Corporation).

The Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to discuss resolution of any issues necessary to place this case in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted:



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